

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-8 (cancelled).

9. (previously presented) An axle driving apparatus, comprising:

a casing including an upper half casing part and a lower half casing part joined with each other through a joint surface;

a hydraulic pump disposed in said casing and including a pump shaft also serving as an input shaft and a pump piston disposed parallel to said pump shaft, wherein said pump shaft is disposed perpendicular to said joint surface of said casing;

a hydraulic motor disposed in said casing and including a motor shaft and a motor piston disposed parallel to said motor shaft, wherein said motor shaft is disposed parallel to said joint surface of said casing and drivingly connected to axles via a differential gear;

a center section disposed in said casing and fluidly connecting said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor with each other, wherein said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted on said center section so that said pump shaft and said motor shaft are disposed perpendicular to each other, wherein said center section is fixed to said upper half casing part, and wherein said center section is provided therein with a closed circuit for hydraulic connection of said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor and with an oil suction port;

a check valve disposed in said center section, wherein said check valve is interposed between said oil suction port and said closed circuit.

10. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 9,
further comprising:

a filter sandwiched between said center section and said lower half casing part,
wherein said oil suction port is open into said filter.

11. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 9,
further comprising:

a movable swash plate of said hydraulic pump disposed in said casing; and
a bearing supported by said movable swash plate, said bearing abutting against
said pump piston.

12. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 11,
further comprising:

a speed control lever shaft interlocking with said movable swash plate, said speed
control lever shaft being rotatably supported by said upper half casing part.

13. (cancelled).

14. (previously presented) An axle driving apparatus comprising:

a casing including an upper half casing part and a lower half casing part joined
with each other;

a hydraulic pump disposed in said casing, said hydraulic pump including a pump
shaft and a pump piston disposed parallel to said pump shaft;

a hydraulic motor disposed in said casing, said hydraulic motor including a motor shaft and a motor piston disposed parallel to said motor shaft;

a center section disposed in said casing for fluidly connecting said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor with each other, wherein said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted on said center section so that said pump shaft and said motor shaft are disposed perpendicularly to each other, and wherein said center section is fixed to said upper half casing part; and

a check valve disposed in said center section, wherein said center section is provided therein with a closed circuit for hydraulic connection of said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor and with an oil suction port, and wherein said check valve is interposed between said closed circuit and said oil suction port.

15. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 14, further comprising:

a filter sandwiched between said center section and said lower half casing part, said oil suction port is open into said filter.

16. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 14, further comprising:

a movable swash plate of said hydraulic pump disposed in said casing; and

a bearing supported by said movable swash plate, said bearing abutting against said pump piston.

17. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 16,
further comprising:

a speed control lever shaft interlocking with said movable swash plate, said speed
control lever shaft being rotatably supported by said upper half casing part.

18. (cancelled).

19. (currently amended) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 14,
further comprising:

a differential gear ~~interlocking with~~ engaging said motor shaft in said casing; and
a pair of axles as output means horizontally disposed in said casing and
differentially connected with each other through said differential gear.

20. (cancelled).

21. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 14,
wherein said motor shaft is horizontally and rotatably supported between said upper half
casing part and said lower half casing part.

22. (currently amended) An axle driving apparatus, comprising:

a hydraulic pump including a pump shaft also serving as an input shaft, a pump
piston disposed parallel to said pump shaft, and a movable swash plate abutting against
said pump piston, said movable swash plate being provided with a detent mechanism;

a hydraulic motor including a motor shaft and a motor piston disposed parallel to said motor shaft;

a center section for fluidly connecting said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor with each other, wherein said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted on said center section so that said pump shaft and said motor shaft are disposed perpendicular to each other;

a differential gear ~~interlocking with~~ engaging said motor shaft; and

a pair of axles as output means differentially connected with each other through said differential gear, wherein said pair of axles are disposed perpendicularly to said pump shaft.

23. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 22, further comprising:

a casing including an upper half casing part and a lower half casing part joined with each other, wherein said hydraulic pump, said hydraulic motor, said center section, said differential gear and said pair of axles are disposed in said casing.

24. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 23, wherein said center section is fixed to said upper half casing part.

25. (previously presented) An axle driving apparatus, comprising:

a casing including an upper half casing part and a lower half casing part joined with each other;

a hydraulic pump disposed in said casing, said hydraulic pump including a pump shaft also serving as an input shaft, a pump piston disposed parallel to said pump shaft, and a movable swash plate abutting against said pump piston, said movable swash plate being provided with a detent mechanism;

a hydraulic motor disposed in said casing, said hydraulic motor including a motor shaft and a motor piston disposed parallel to said motor shaft; and

a center section disposed in said casing for fluidly connecting said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor with each other, wherein said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted on said center section so that said pump shaft and said motor shaft are disposed perpendicularly to each other.

26. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 25, wherein said center section is fixed to said upper half casing part.

27. (currently amended) An axle driving apparatus, comprising:

a hydraulic pump including a pump shaft also serving as an input shaft and a pump piston disposed parallel to said pump shaft;

a hydraulic motor including a motor shaft and a motor piston disposed parallel to said motor shaft;

a center section for fluidly connecting said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor with each other, wherein said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted on said center section so that said pump shaft and said motor shaft are disposed perpendicular to each other;

a differential gear ~~interlocking with~~ engaging said motor shaft; and

a pair of axles as output means differentially connected with each other through said differential gear, wherein said pair of axles are disposed perpendicularly to said pump shaft and parallel to said motor shaft, and wherein said pump shaft is disposed between said motor shaft and said pair of axles.

28. (previously presented) The axle driving apparatus as set forth in claim 27, further comprising: a casing including an upper half casing part and a lower half casing part joined with each other, wherein said hydraulic pump, said hydraulic motor, said center section, said differential gear and said pair of axles are disposed in said casing.